

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

20 August 2001

SUBJECT: 16 August 2001 meeting of the Umbrella Coordination Team (UCT)

GENERAL

1. Subject meeting was held at the Ramada – Grand Forks from 1300 – 1430. UCT and non-UCT attendees are indicated by Y below.

UMBRELLA COORDINATION TEAM				
	ORGANIZATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
U.S. / Canada Federal				
Y	COE	Tom Raster	651-290-5238	Thomas.e.raster@usace.army.mil
N	USFWS	Terry Ellsworth	701-250-4492	terry_ellsworth@fws.gov
Y	NRCS	Doug VanDaalen	701-530-2094	doug.vandaalen@nd.usda.gov
N		Glen Kajewski	218-681-6600	glen.kajewski@mn.usda.gov
N	Canada PFRA	Alain Vermette	204-984-3694	Vermettea@em.agr.ca
Tribal				
N	Red Lake Band	Chuck Meyer	218-679-3959	cmeyer@paulbunyan.net
Y*		Janice Bradley*		
N	White Earth Band	Monica Hedstrom	218-573-3007	jannette@tvutel.com
State / Province				
Y	MB Conservation – Water	John Towle	204-945-6152	jtowle@gov.mb.ca
N		Steve Topping	204-945-7488	stopping@gov.mb.ca
N	MB Conservation – Fisheries	Joe O'Connor	204-945-7814	joconnor@gov.mb.ca
N	MN DNR	Larry Kramka	218-755-3973	larry.kramka@dnr.state.mn.us
Y		Gale Mayer	218-755-4482	gale.mayer@dnr.state.mn.us
N	MN PCA	Jeff Lewis	218-846-0730	jeff.lewis@pca.state.mn.us
Y	MN BWSR	Brian Dwight	218-755-3963	brian.dwight@bwsr.state.mn.us
Y	ND SWC	Randy Gjestvang	701-282-2318	rgjest@water.swc.state.nd.us
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Y	ND GF	Lynn Schlueter	701-662-3617	lschluet@state.nd.us
N	ND DH	Mike Sauer	701-328-5237	msauer@state.nd.us
Regional				
Y	RRBB	Chuck Fritz	218-291-0422	chuckr2b2@corpcomm.net
N		Angela Whitney	218-291-0422	angelar2b2@corpcomm.net
Y	RRWMB	Don Ogaard	218-784-4156	dogaard@means.net
Y		Dick Nelson	218-289-4437	rpn@means.net
N	RRJWRB	Gary Thompson	701-436-5812	tully@polarcomm.com
Y	Pembina Valley Water Coop	Sam Schellenberg	204-324-1931	pvdcorp@mts.net
Local				
Y	Fargo	Mark Bittner	701-241-1572	mhbittner@ci.fargo.nd.us
Y	Wahpeton	Jim Azure	701-642-6565	jima@wahpeton.com
Y	GF -EGF	Dean Wieland	701-746-7459	dwieland@prodigy.net
Non-Governmental Organizations				
N	Audubon Society (ND)	Genevieve Thompson	701-298-3373	gthompson@audubon.org
N	MCEA	Mark Ten Eyck	651-223-5969	mteneyck@mncenter.org
N	River Keepers	Bob Backman	701-235-2895	rkeepers@i29.net

*Representing Chuck Meyer

NON-UCT ATTENDEES				
	ORGANIZATION	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
Y	MN BWSR	Ron Shelito	218-828-2604	N.A.
Y	David Miller & Associates	Chuck Workman	919-806-8494	cworkman@dma-us.com
Y		Eldon Kraft	818-833-9728	ekraft@dma-us.com

2. Kraft briefly described the revisions in the 905(b) write-up from the previous, strawman version ... and discussed what to expect and how a non-Fed sponsor could get the most out of the follow-up feasibility study. He emphasized that the feasibility study scope is tailored to the needs of the non-Fed sponsor during the Project Management Plan (PMP) negotiations... that the schedule can build in checkpoints to assess if interim findings point to a “negative outcome” such that the sponsor might want to “pull the plug” on the study rather than continue to invest more money ... and that there are a number of ongoing non-Fed efforts that could provide in-kind credit toward the non-Fed cost share if their timing works out with the Feasibility Study Cost-sharing Agreement (FCSA) between the Corps and sponsor. He said that new guidance no longer requires the Corps to identify the “NED” plan, i.e., where the project achieves maximum net benefits; the sponsor can settle for a less costly level of protection.

3. We emphasized that the three lead-off follow-up feasibility studies – basinwide/mainstem, Fargo-Moorhead and upstream subbasin, and the Wild Rice (MN) subbasin – won’t get off the ground unless the 905(b) report includes non-binding letters of intent (LOIs) from potential non-Fed sponsors indicating an interest in partnering. Assuming the COE’s Higher Authority gives its go-ahead, the St. Paul District and sponsor will negotiate the feasibility study scope of work, which will lay out what both agree must be in the study, specify who does what (in case the sponsor wants to do or contract for a task that will be eligible for in-kind credit toward the non-Fed cost share), estimate the cost and timeframe, etc. Then the COE and sponsor sign the Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA), which is the formal contract; but that, too, has provisions for either party to terminate the study.

4. We also welcome letters of support (LOSs) from stakeholders that might provide funding or in-kind support for the official non-Fed sponsor ... or perhaps support in the form of lobbying for local funds at the State Legislature.

5. We discussed the possibility of a sponsor for the feasibility phase ... and a different sponsor for implementation (i.e., detailed design and construction). For example, we could have the RRBB be the sponsor for the basinwide/mainstem feasibility study, and then switch to a local governmental body (e.g., the Middle River-Snake River Watershed District) for implementation.

6. Someone pointed out that there was a provision [Section 211(f) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996] that allowed the sponsor to get credit from the Corps for advance construction of a project feature.

7. When there seemed to be a roadblock in identifying sponsors for the basinwide/mainstem feasibility study, I noted that a primary objective of the RRRS was to provide a comprehensive, basinwide, holistic, coordinated planning perspective ... which would be lost if we resorted to a dozen or so subbasin feasibility studies, with each tributary watershed looking out for its own parochial interests, but no one tracking the “big picture” to watch for opportunities for mainstem benefits and flag possible adverse impacts.

8. I commented that I had always envisioned the RRWMB and RRJWRB co-sponsoring the basinwide/mainstem feasibility study.

9. Ogaard said that the RRWMB can’t sign a LOI on behalf of all nine member watershed districts; it’s the members that sponsor the project. He rightly reminded everybody that no single entity in MN or ND has the authority for the Red River mainstem ... and that each ND county WMB or MN watershed district has jurisdiction over a piece of the mainstem. [NOTE: I believe that this is basically the point of paragraph 5: The RRWMB might co-sponsor (e.g., with the RRJWRB) the basinwide/mainstem study ... and the individual watershed districts would be the sponsors for implementation of spin-off projects in Minnesota (hopefully, with financial support from the RRWMB).]

10. Gjestvang said that the RRJWRB’s Executive Board will meet before the end of August, but the full Board won’t meet till 12 September.

11. Dwight asked what would happen if the RRWMB issued a LOI, but the RRJWRB did not? This would be a serious constraint in study scope ... because the RRWMB shouldn't have to pay for studying measures in ND. The feeling was that mainstem modeling could be done, but that measures in ND would not be looked at.

12. Looking at the broader modeling issue, Towle commented that Canada's MIKE 11 model (which currently terminates at GF-EGF) could be expanded to the entire basin.

13. Dwight suggested that a candidate sponsor could issue a LOI now ... and then sponsorship could shift to another entity when it came time to sign the FCSEA. For example, the RRBB might issue a LOI now ... to buy time for the RRWMB and RRJWRB to work out the kinks for them to actually sponsor the basinwide/mainstem feasibility study.

14. There was concern that only the cost-sharing sponsor would be at the negotiating table with the Corps ... and, therefore, the scope of the Project Management Plan (PMP, i.e., plan of study) would reflect just one perspective ... whereas there are many other stakeholders that should have an opportunity to protect their interests. There was considerable discussion about the appropriateness of the RRBB as sponsor for the basinwide/mainstem feasibility study. PRO: It represents most of the key stakeholders in the basin (on both sides of the International Border) ... and would bring those interests to the negotiation table to make sure that the feasibility study reflects all viewpoints. CON: The RRBB lacks the financial resources to be a 50/50 cost-sharing sponsor; other stakeholders [e.g., the RRWMB and RRJWRB?] could partner with the RRBB and contribute funds or in-kind services.

15. Because some potential sponsors don't meet and won't be able to consider issuing a LOI until early September, I agreed to postpone forwarding the 905(b) report to Corps' Higher Authorities until mid-September.

Thomas E. Raster
Project Manager